

HB 818

Community Solar Utility Consolidated Billing

A ONE BILL SOLUTION

Chairman Clippinger
ECM hearing: 2/24 1pm



A HUGE fix for Community Solar's low-income families.
HB818 paves the way for Maryland's Community Solar program
to be billed on one utility bill.

Designed with an environmental justice vision, Maryland's Community Solar program offers income-eligible families discounts up to 25% discount off the community solar rates on their electricity bill.

Yet today's Community Solar billing doesn't work for many low-income families, it's invoiced on two separate bills (utility and solar developer).

PROBLEM

We've learned a lot during 5-year pilot phase. Many low-income families can't enroll in projects meant to serve them. WHY? One key reason is...

- No credit cards: Two bills requires a debit or credit card. Many low-income families don't use these banking options.
- Losing "OHEP" energy assistance: Energy assistance is only paid to utilities. With separate billing, families receiving energy assistance who join Community Solar lose part - even most - of their energy assistance grants.

SOLUTION - HB818

Community Solar charges to be billed on ONE utility consolidated bill — say a BGE or Pepco bill — just as it's done for other third-party energy programs.

BENEFITS

- Utility Consolidated Billing's already in place. 400,000 MD accounts use it today.
- More low-income families on Community Solar discounts means more affordable utility bills and lower past-due balances (arrearages).
- Realize legislature's original environmental justice vision - equal solar access for all.